

PITTSBURGH'S REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN



A New Ethic of Stewardship

"The beauty of the park . . . should be the beauty of the fields, the meadow, the prairie, of the green pastures, and the still waters. What we want to gain is tranquility and rest to the mind . . . A great object of all that is done in a park, of all the art of the park, is to influence the mind of men through their imagination."

Frederick Law Olmsted (Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns, 1870)

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A New Ethic of Stewardship

PREPARED FOR:

CITY OF PITTSBURGH - DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
PITTSBURGH PARKS CONSERVANCY

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As this Plan was being finalized, we were saddened by the death of Barbara Balbot, long-time director of the Frick Environmental Center. Her indomitable spirit and steadfast devotion to the ecological integrity of Frick Park helped shape this Plan into a living document that will guide the future of our four Regional Parks.

Executive Summary

Defining a New Ethic of Stewardship

Purpose and Process

Pittsburgh's great 19th and early 20th Century parks are a wonderful collection of landscapes and special places that need to be renewed. The purpose of this Master Plan is to provide a foundation for a new way of thinking about these precious landscapes, rooted in an ethic of stewardship which focuses on the necessary resources and energies needed to preserve, restore and enhance Frick, Highland, Riverview and Schenley Parks.

Many public and private partners were involved in preparation of the Master Plan, including an extensive public process to build consensus for the proposed initiatives and recommendations. These included the City of Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning, in close collaboration with the Pittsburgh Park's Conservancy, as well as the Management Team, that included various City departments, and the citizens of Pittsburgh.

Goals of the Master Plan

The goals of the Master Plan are simple and straight forward. It is hoped that these goals will foster a total park experience that addresses the natural, cultural and educational opportunities that great parks can provide.

- Build public awareness and a strong constituency for the parks.
- Renew the landscape character and aesthetics of the parks.
- Capture the historic legacy of the parks.
- Restore human vitality and ecological integrity of the parks.
- Foster connections between the parks, the rivers and the rest of the city.
- Enhance visitor services.
- Provide a new model for management and maintenance.
- Create a foundation for a sustainable future.

A Key Objective

In studying restoration efforts from other cities that have similar parks, it was determined that the most successful efforts balanced the demands of current uses while preserving the parks historic legacy and sustaining their ecological integrity. Thus the primary objective of this master plan became *balancing use, history and ecology within each park*. This became our planning mantra and the reader will see it repeated throughout this document.

Executive Summary



Elements of the Master Plan

To achieve the integration and balance of use, history and ecology which will integrate the parks' natural systems and built environment into a cohesive and shared ecosystem. There are two major elements of the plan.

- **Creation of a Parks System**

A comprehensive strategy is proposed to begin thinking of these four great parks as a system for improved management and maintenance strategies, enhanced visitor services, educational programs, and to provide a framework for the establishment of an interconnected system of parks and greenways.

- **Renewal of Frick, Highland, Riverview and Schenley Parks**

It is intended that the system-wide strategies will be applied to each individual park and that additional site specific, capital improvement projects are proposed to enhance the landscape character, historically significant sites and recreational spaces. Again, all projects will embrace the balance of use, history and ecology.

Use.

Provide a varied set of facilities to serve a diverse population, including enhanced recreational opportunities within a diverse landscape setting.

History.

Ensure that the existing, historic integrity of the parks and that historically significant landscapes are restored. In addition, reclaim the historic diverse landscape types such as woodlands, shrublands, and gardens.

Ecology.

Recognize that all landscape types in the parks have an ecological value. Through an integrated and comprehensive natural resource management program, which would include woodland and stream management studies, a framework for preservation, enhancement and restoration will be established. In addition sustainable landscape maintenance and landscape practices must be defined.

- **Management and Governance**

A new management plan for Pittsburgh's Regional Parks is proposed, which includes a new model for management structure, a focus on the primacy of park maintenance, and the expansion of the partnership between the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

- **Maintenance**

With the renewed ethic of stewardship the maintenance of the four parks must become a priority. Proposals include implementing park specific, dedicated maintenance crews guided by policies, procedures and performance standards.



Executive Summary

- **Cost and Timeline**

The Pittsburgh Regional Parks Master Plan is estimated to cost \$113.5 million of public and private funds. Although no specific timeline has been developed it is estimated that 20 years for implementation is achievable.

System-Wide Strategies

Including woodland, stream restoration projects, trail improvements, renovation of park drives, improvements to user services, marketing and signage are estimated to cost \$26.2 million.

Capital Improvement Projects for the Four Regional Parks

Comprehensive park projects that encompass all aspects of each Regional Park and balance Use, History, and Ecology. Improvements are estimated to cost \$87.3 million.

Continuing the Process

The Master Plan is considered to be a “living document” that will be continually shaped through public dialogue and user demands. The Master Plan intends to provide a comprehensive framework to inform decision making and to ensure that all new projects meet the main objective - *a balance of use, history, and ecology*.

Table of Contents

Part One: The Master Planning Process - Creating a Stewardship Ethic

Developing a Stewardship Ethic	Page 5
Introduction	Page 5
The Planning Process	Page 5
A Green Web	Page 6
A Living Document	Page 6
 Principles and Goals	Page 7
General Principles for the Parks	Page 7
Restoring the Designed Landscape	Page 7
Visitor Needs	Page 8
<i>Visitor Goals</i>	
Historic Preservation	Page 9
<i>Historic Preservation Goals</i>	
Ecological Integrity	Page 9
<i>Ecological Goals</i>	

Part Two: Creating a Park System for Pittsburgh

Parks Past and Present - Basis for Developing A Vision	Page 13
 A Vision for the Future - Park System Recommendations	Page 15
Connections and Network Strategies	Page 16
<i>The Challenge of Creating a Park System</i>	
Capital Improvement Strategies	Page 20
Operations and Management Strategies	Page 21
<i>Integrated Resource Management</i>	
<i>Revenue Issues</i>	
Visitor Services Strategies	Page 23
Partnership Strategies	Page 24
 Maintaining the Built Landscape	Page 25
<i>The Importance of Landscape Types</i>	
<i>Existing Landscape Types</i>	
<i>Redefining the Landscape - New and Diversified Landscape Types</i>	
<i>Management Goals for Individual Landscape Types</i>	
<i>Design Considerations Based on Landscape Types</i>	
 A New Beginning - Accomplishments to Date	Page 31
 Creating a System: System-Wide Strategies	Page 32
 Summary	Page 33

Table of Contents (cont.)

Part Three: Individual Park Recommendations

Frick Park	Page 37
Historical Summary	
Current Ecological Conditions	
Renewal Projects	
Highland Park	Page 57
Historical Summary	
Current Ecological Conditions	
Renewal Projects	
Riverview Park	Page 79
Historical Summary	
Current Ecological Conditions	
Renewal Projects	
Schenley Park	Page 97
Historical Summary	
Current Ecological Conditions	
Renewal Projects	
Making a Difference - Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Projects	Page 122
Conclusion	Page 123

Part Four: Appendix

Design Guidelines	Page A-3
Site Furnishings	
Architecture	
Renewal Projects	
Department of Public Works - Business Plan	Page A-25
Preliminary Cost Estimates	Page A-29
Frick Park	
Highland Park	
Riverview Park	
Schenley Park	
Priorities and Capital Improvement Priorities	Page A-40

Part One

The Master Planning Process: Creating a Stewardship Ethic

Developing a Stewardship Ethic

Principles and Goals

Developing A Stewardship Ethic: the Master Plan Process

Introduction

Pittsburgh is fortunate to have a diverse collection of 19th and early-20th Century parks. The four largest, Frick, Schenley, Highland and Riverview are considered Regional Parks. This distinction is based on size and makes these parks eligible for funding through the Allegheny Regional Asset District. A realization that Pittsburgh's Regional Parks have suffered from years of neglect, deferred maintenance and inappropriate interventions has led to this master plan, which is the beginning of concerted efforts to restore them. Crumbling infrastructure, conflicts between users and general deterioration are symptoms of management problems that have, for too long, been left unresolved. Given the current state of these parks, the task of restoring them to meaningful civic spaces seems daunting. Luckily, the tide of public opinion and a climate of renewed interest in parks and the natural environment is creating much needed support for such efforts.

The premise that initiated this study was that there must be a fundamental shift in the way we, as a City, view parks. They are not left over places, but an integral part of the fabric of our city. We need to address ecological management in the parks, or they will cease to provide habitat; we need to rethink the way we approach recreation and athletic fields, or they will no longer serve us; we need to nurture the parks historic legacy, or it will crumble; and we need to re-evaluate roadways, or our parks will be nothing more than parking lots and commuter routes. In order to insure that the Parks are maintained in a manner that will sustain them for the second century of their life as Pittsburgh's principal public spaces, we must create public consensus for their stewardship. We must begin again to think of these Parks as their creators did - as precious, valued landscapes that are assets to the community. Therefore, the primary goal of this master planning effort is the establishment of a renewed ethic of stewardship for the citizens of the Pittsburgh region, which will focus the necessary resources and energies on rebuilding our parks and preserving them for the future.

An ethic of stewardship is based on the responsibility to maintain and care for the needs and possessions of others. In the case of the Regional Parks, we, the citizens of Pittsburgh have not been good stewards. We have allowed them to deteriorate and have allowed incompatible and intrusive interventions to compromise their design character. We are however, not alone. This is a pattern that has been played out in older cities across the country, but like those other cities Pittsburgh has now forged a strong alliance of public and private interests to invest in our parks. A collaborative group of public and private partners has participated in the development of this Master Plan which will serve as the road map for restoration efforts and the continuing stewardship that will sustain those efforts.

The Planning Process

Many partners were involved in the development of this master plan. The City of Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning in close collaboration with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy led the planning effort by convening four citizen task forces - one for each park. With the help of the Technical Design Team, meetings, workshops and symposia were held to solicit the views of Pittsburghers and develop the initiatives and recommendations of this plan. In the same way that the Regional Parks function as democratic social spaces that sus-



Frick Park



Schenley Park



Highland Park



Riverview Park

Primary Goal of the Master Plan:

Establish a renewed Ethic of Stewardship for the citizens of Pittsburgh regarding Highland, Frick Riverview and Schenley Parks.

tain city life, so too the master plan had to reflect a broad consensus of public opinion and users needs. Therefore, citizen input and the review and comment of the task forces have been critical to the development of this document.

This master plan addresses various areas of design, planning, maintenance, preservation/conservation and management that determine the quality of the built elements in our historic parks. In-depth research and analysis of existing conditions preceded the development of these proposals and was a critical foundation of knowledge for all design team members. The members of the task forces provided important information to this process, whether the issues were ecological conditions, wildlife observations, current or historical use patterns, or simply their own intimate knowledge of the everyday life of the park. Ultimately, the visitors and neighbors of the park know the parks the best, and their reactions and observations were essential to refining the final recommendations in this document.

A Green Web

This master plan comes at a time of intense interest in Pittsburgh on issues of sustainability, green development and the need to capitalize on the “green assets” of the landscape setting of the City. Preservation of open spaces and green hillsides, expansion of greenways and trail systems, wetland and waterway restoration and a new focus on the opportunities of the three rivers all combine with this plan to argue for a larger view of the City’s “green infrastructure”. The opportunity must be seized to establish a Green Web that extends throughout the City that will establish an interconnected Parks System.

This master plan is a comprehensive set of recommendations for the revitalization of the four Regional Parks. These recommendations must be put into a context that will lead to the creation of a Parks System that will physically and organizationally connect them throughout the City of Pittsburgh. This plan identifies important points at which each of the Regional Parks can be connected to trails and/or greenways that can extend the reach out from the park, both recreationally and ecologically into the City and out to the Rivers. In conjunction with existing and proposed trails and greenways such as the Three Rivers Heritage trail, the Eliza Furnace trail, the impending improvements to Nine Mile Run corridor and other proposals, the Regional Parks will form the core of a Parks System that can extend this web throughout the City and region.

A Living Document

The recommendations of this master plan are intended as guides for the future implementation projects that will be necessary to achieve the established goals. These recommendations were arrived at through a lengthy public involvement process and, while there may be disagreements about specific items, they represent a consensus of opinion around the core principles described in this document. The balancing act in the useful future life of any master plan is to achieve a consistency to the goals and principles established during the process of developing that plan, while remaining flexible to unforeseen future needs and desires. In this way, the document remains a “living document” that guides and responds to change without gathering dust on a shelf. During the course of implementing future projects, the specific recommendations should be reviewed through a constantly updated public process so that even with changing needs, the objectives that are based in those core goals and principles can be reached.

Principles & Goals for the Master Plan

Restoring the Designed Landscape

The Regional Parks are designed landscapes, based in the traditions of the romantic picturesque landscape style common to most of 19th Century park design. As such, the design approach to their overall arrangement and layout, as well as the details, was intended to maximize an idealized experience of nature through a series of composed views of open meadows enclosed by woodland edges. The woodlands that contained those meadows would then be used for a forest experience that emphasized a rugged or rustic view of nature. For example, Schenley Park epitomizes this approach in the contrast between the open fields of the golf course, defined and separated by the Serpentine Drive from the interior woodlands of Panther Hollow. These parks were primarily designed for what we today would consider more “passive” recreation; walking, strolling, and driving.

While each of the parks contains a rich collection of historic elements, they have come to have increasingly important functions as active and passive recreation spaces, and as we continue to learn, important ecological reserves. As recreational interests have grown, and the available undeveloped land has shrunk throughout the region, the recreational and ecological importance of these parks has grown larger, while time and decay has worked to obscure their significance as historic design artifacts.

Each park has these qualities and demands to a greater or lesser extent, but each has a recognizable and distinct character based on its original design intent. Restoring the human vitality and ecological integrity of the parks is necessary, while at the same time preserving that essential character that is critical to maintaining each parks identity.

What was found in studying restoration efforts from other cities was that the most successful of them balanced the demands of current uses while preserving the parks historic legacy and sustaining their ecological integrity. **Thus the primary objective of this master plan became balancing use, history and ecology within each park.** This became our planning mantra and the reader will see it repeated throughout this document. These three factors are not necessarily found in equal parts in each of the parks, but the master plan seeks to achieve an appropriate emphasis depending on the existing and historic conditions as well as how each park is used and perceived by its citizens.

General principles, based on the fundamental notion of balancing these three factors were developed to help guide the development and final conclusions of this master plan as well as future projects and management initiatives.

General Principles for the Parks

- Integrate current use, ecology and history - all future developments and restorations within the parks must balance these three factors.
- Foster a network of connections through streets, boulevards, trails and natural systems between the parks, to the rivers and the rest of the city that will expand Pittsburgh's character as a green city.
- Build sustainable landscapes that preserve and restore ecology and history.
- Emphasize park uses and recreation over vehicles - parks are for people and their enjoyment. Access to them must be a priority, but their use as parking



*A classic, picturesque park landscape
- large mature trees with a field of turf.*

Primary Objective of the Master Plan:

*Balance the qualities of use,
history and ecology within the
Regional Parks*

reservoirs for non-park uses and commuter routes should be de-emphasized.

- Guide appropriate recreational uses that are consistent with the landscape character of the park and the appropriateness of the setting. While recognizing the importance of the Parks as recreational resources, we must understand that because of topography they cannot fulfill all of the active recreational needs of City residents.
- Establish a new design standard for all park projects that is consistent with the high standards of the past.
- Develop long range stewardship, maintenance and management practices that will sustain and preserve the major capital investments that will be needed to restore the parks to their former glory.
- Provide high quality visitor services

Visitor Needs



Many visitors use the parks simply for relaxing and enjoying the outdoors.

The contributions of the members of the task forces, which were largely composed of residents of adjacent neighborhoods, or representatives of major institutions in or adjacent to the parks, was the most consistent voice of park visitors. Additionally, The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy conducted both intercept and telephone surveys, as well as focus group interviews which clearly illustrated the importance of the parks to both neighborhood and regional visitors.

Clearly a strong and vital parks system is a key element of the quality of life desired by a broad cross-section, if not all, Pittsburghers. Restoring the Regional Parks, in conjunction with an expanded system of trails and other neighborhood and riverfront parks - the Green Web - is a key part of Pittsburgh's long-term economic development strategy. In pursuit of understanding this role, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy conducted focus group interviews with young professionals regarding the role of the parks in the new economy. This demographic group, so important to Pittsburgh's future, demonstrated a strong interest and commitment to a variety of park environments and uses ranging from intensive sports such as running and mountain biking to more relaxed activities such as walking, picnicking and boating. Input from these and various other groups helped us establish the following goals:

Visitor Goals for the Master Plan

- Provide a varied set of facilities to serve the diversity of visitors.
- Insure no net loss of active recreation areas and insure that current uses are enhanced, while recognizing that the regional parks cannot fulfill all the recreational needs of the City. Long-term viability of fields requires the ability to control use and close fields periodically for maintenance.
- Active recreation should be located so it is compatible with the landscape setting. For example, the Fern Hollow ball fields in Frick Park are incompatible with the landscape. They were built within the flood plain of Nine Mile Run and are therefore damp, rendering them unusable at times.
- Expand the diversity of landscapes within the Parks to enhance the pedestrian experience of the natural environment.
- Renovate and maintain destination facilities, such as The Oval in Schenley Park.
- Improve security and promote enforcement of regulations.
- Conveniently locate visitor facilities such as restrooms, signs and benches.



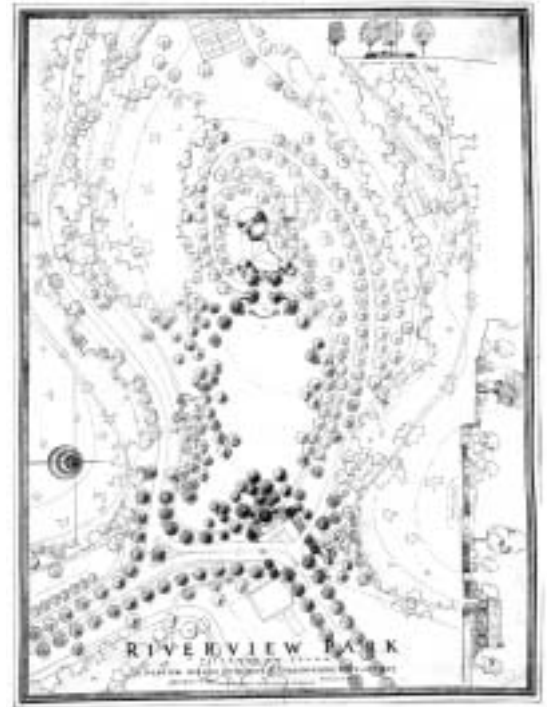
Elements in the parks, whether they are pavilions, playgrounds or sports fields need to address the diversity of user needs.

Historic Preservation

Historical research and analysis was conducted as part of the master planning process. After conducting a thorough review of the available archives, a narrative and a chronology of the development of the four parks from 1870's through the 1950's was compiled. The Parks were also analyzed for their character defining elements and unique design qualities to develop a historic landscape assessment according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. The following aspects were analyzed for their contribution to the historic character of the Regional Parks: spatial organization, topography, vegetation, circulation, water elements, park use structures, site furnishings and other objects. This historic assessment uncovered a far richer history of design and planning for the parks than had been previously thought, including the long-standing participation of a respected design firm, Innocenti & Webel in the development of Frick Park for 30 years, up until the 1950's. From this inventory and analysis, the following goals were developed:

Historic Preservation Goals for the Master Plan

- Insure no loss of existing historic integrity by preserving and restoring existing historic resources.
- Focus on the rehabilitation of historically significant landscapes and structures before the restoration of lost historic elements.
- Reclaim the historic diversity of landscape types including woodlands, shrublands and gardens.
- Develop design guidelines for new structures and furnishings that are compatible with historic character.
- Restore native woodland and waterway habitats since they were historically part of the original designed landscape.



Understanding the original design intent is critical when renovating significant landscapes. Historic drawings, like this one of the Observatory, gives many clues to the arrangement and planting.

Ecological Integrity

Five categories of ecological assessment were carried out in each of the four parks: vegetation; topography, geology and soils; hydrology; landscape management; and wildlife habitat. These assessments were carried out by combining extensive field investigations with the study of a variety of available information, including maps, aerial photographs, surveys, inventories and other recently completed reports and studies. The participation of many stakeholders, in particular, the Frick Environmental Center was instrumental in developing and enhancing these assessments. In particular, the Ecological Symposium, sponsored by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy stimulated a fruitful discussion between the community, the planning team and other experts and resulted directly in the following goals:



The ecological health of the parks is important for wildlife as well as people

Ecological Goals for the Master Plan

- Develop preservation and enhancement strategies based on ecology, history and current use.
- Set a framework for the preservation, enhancement and restoration of the park landscape and ecological habitats through integrated natural resource management.
- Provide a new ecological vocabulary for the park landscape, which expands the diversity of landscape types to support a greater variety of plant and animal habitats.
- Match compatible use patterns with the landscape types in order to insure sustainable management and maintenance strategies.
- Integrate human storm water infrastructure and natural systems in an effort to improve the ecological condition of streams and waterways.
- Develop sustainable landscape maintenance practices based on integrated pest management and organic practices.
- Establish guidelines for the use and management of native and non-invasive exotic plant and animal species.

Part Two

Creating a Park System for Pittsburgh

Parks Past and Present - Basis for Developing a Vision

A Vision for the Future - Park System Recommendations

Connections and Networks

Capital Improvement Strategies

Operations and Management Strategies

Visitor Service Strategies

Partnership Strategies

A New Beginning - Accomplishments to Date

Parks Past and Present - Basis for Developing a Vision

Past

The Regional Parks were not originally developed to be a system in the way we use that word today. As in many other cities, parkland in Pittsburgh was relegated to places deemed too steep to develop for other uses; this was particularly true in Pittsburgh because of the rugged topography. As the city grew around them, the Regional Parks remain to this day some of the largest and most intact areas of woodland and wildlife habitat.

From the earliest records of the parks, these were places to escape the city and experience nature. The historic photographs and design drawings show a level of craftsmanship and an attention to detail that is rare today. Infrastructure, such as walls, bridges, walks, curbs and drainage systems were handsomely constructed and still survive. Although adequate at the time, this infrastructure has passed its life expectancy and has not been properly maintained.

Early park maintenance records indicate a history of care and enhancement. There was also great emphasis on horticulture and ornamental gardening of which the remnants are barely visible. Like many park systems, Pittsburgh parks fell into a cycle of decreasing funds, a decline in the skilled labor force, an emphasis placed on suburbanization and the priority of needs other than parks.

Present

Currently, the four Regional Parks are in a state of neglect. The rustic stone bridges in Schenley Park's Panther Hollow, the stately grounds of the Allegheny Observatory in Riverview Park, the gatehouse entries of Frick Park and the formal entry gardens of Highland Park all hint at a once glorious past. These are currently suffering from declining maintenance resources.

Many of the most rugged slopes in the Parks are covered by lush vegetation which falsely gives the appearance that this vegetation is "natural" and the landscape has always been this way. However, what appears to be mature woodland and existing topography is actually land that was disturbed and re-vegetated through natural succession. Although we view our Parks as "natural", few natural environments exist. These are created landscapes that need maintenance and management to thrive. Years of over-use, lack of maintenance and a belief that the forest cover will return if left alone has resulted in erosion, degraded waterways and a proliferation of exotic and invasive species.

The Regional Parks currently serve many of the same uses that they were intended to serve. Even though tastes in recreation have changed, surveys conducted by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy revealed that "residents are most likely to go to a park to take a walk, for a family picnic or to exercise" and "residents use area parks for just relaxing, sunbathing or reading". This comes from *Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Parks Image/Perceptions Study (#98-870): Quantitative Research Report (May 1999)*, conducted by Campos Market Research.



The pedestrian underpass in Highland Park typifies the rugged craftsmanship of features in the parks



The Pedestrian Underpass today - unfortunately many wonderful elements are in need of repair.

Even though these traditional uses still occur, new modern activities are also occurring. Mountain Biking, roller blading and heavily organized youth sports have a great impact on the Parks use and their long-term management. Since very few new athletic fields have been developed in recent years and the demand for field space increases each year, the remaining space within the Regional Parks is under tremendous pressure for field uses.

The dominance of the automobile is present in all Parks save Frick. Roadways define Highland, Schenley and Riverview Park and create conflicts with parking, commuters and speeding. The century-old roadway infrastructure, that was originally designed for pleasure driving, is being over-taxed by the modern demand. Special events (primarily in Schenley) have placed a tremendous burden on already stressed landscapes and maintenance staff.



Decaying and inadequate drainage infrastructure, like this channel, are not sufficient to handle modern demands.

The infrastructure (walls, bridges, drainage channels, etc.) that remains from the earliest days of the park is in poor condition and is inadequate to handle current demand. Continued degradation is evident in areas such as the Nine Mile Run stream valley (Frick) and Panther Hollow (Schenley) and bears witness to the effect years of storm water erosion and deferred maintenance have on archaic systems.

Currently the Department of Public Works conducts maintenance within the Parks. Originally, the Department of Parks and Recreation handled all activities in the Parks, but it was reorganized in 1992 and maintenance shifted to Public Works while the Department of Parks and Recreation handles programming.

New capital projects and repairs within the parks are handled in a variety of ways. Quite often, the Department of Public Works initiates a project and performs the work. The Department of City Planning, the Department of Parks and Recreation or the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy may also initiate a project to be constructed by the Department of Public Works. Some projects are designed in-house by the Department of Engineering and Construction staff while others are designed by private firms (under contract with the Department of Engineering and Construction or the Department of City Planning) and are publicly bid and constructed by private contractors.

At the outset of this master planning process, no single authoritative body existed that was responsible for all aspects of the parks including planning, design and construction. Without a clear set of directions, many wonderful park elements have been removed and replaced with inappropriate interventions. Although well intentioned, many projects lack the funding, quality materials or design oversight to make them worthy of inclusion in our Parks. The effect has been a degradation of park character, loss of visual consistency and a lack of regard for the importance of materials and aesthetics.

A Vision for the Future - Park System Recommendations

To restore our Parks and bring them into a larger organization that we can refer to as the Pittsburgh Parks System will require a fundamental change in how all aspects of the Parks are planned, designed, constructed, maintained and managed. While the primary objective of this planning process has been to balance ecology, history and use in each park, that objective must be expanded to include the establishment of an interconnected network of parks and greenways throughout the city. This needs to occur at the organizational level as well as the maintenance and operations level. This goal must become a primary part of the planning and organizational agenda, one that is built into a new management structure for these efforts to succeed.

As part of this master planning process and in collaboration with the Department of City Planning, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy has completed “A Management Plan for Pittsburgh’s Regional Parks” using Timothy Marshall & Associates as the planning consultant. That document made recommendations for the reorganization of the management functions for the parks; the key initiatives of that plan have been incorporated into this document. The principal recommendations of the Management Plan can be stated as:

- *The primacy of park maintenance should be restored.*
- *A management structure should be implemented that will be responsible for meeting the management goals in the report, which are:*
 - 1) *Restore the physical and ecological infrastructure of the Parks including buildings, woodlands, trees, streams and ponds.*
 - 2) *Implement new and exciting programs that provide a range of activities for people of all ages and interests.*
 - 3) *Upgrade Park operations including security, park management and landscape maintenance.*
 - 4) *Preserve and interpret the history of the Regional Parks, retaining features unique to their evolution as public spaces.*
- *Expand the existing partnership between the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.*

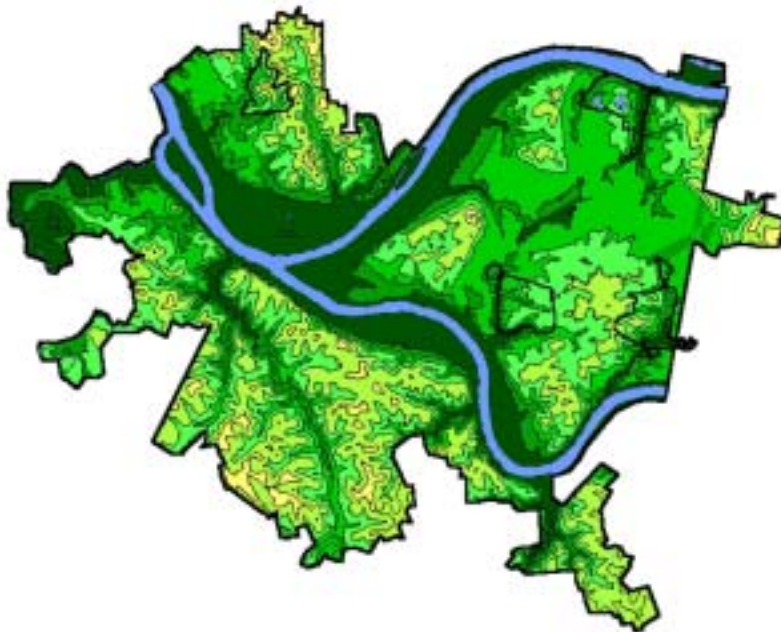
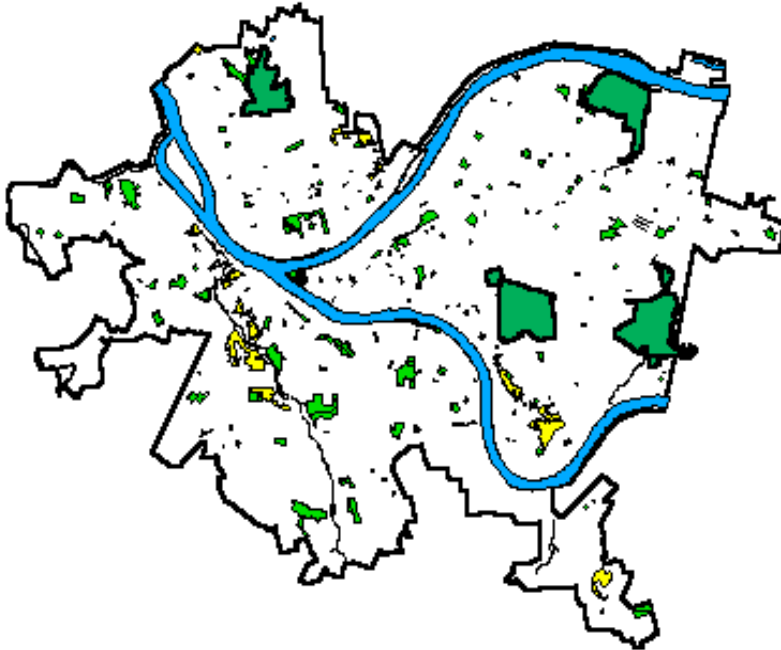
In developing a series of general recommendations for a Parks System for Pittsburgh, these management issues have been incorporated into a larger set of concerns related to the creation of such a system as well as the following topics:

- Connections and Network Strategies
- Capital Improvement Strategies
- Operations and Management Strategies
- User Service Strategies
- Partnership Strategies



An aerial sketch of what Schenley Plaza could be, restored to its original intention as a grand entry yet accommodating modern needs.

Connections and Networks



Components of the System

To create a true park system or Green Web requires careful attention to each component (park) in the system. When renewing each of the Regional Parks, common elements and opportunities to share resources should be considered as well as the characteristics that make each of these parks special. The unique elements should be celebrated (water in Highland, ecology in Frick, topography in Riverview and civic pride in Schenley) and those features that contribute to that special character should be restored.

Realizing that the four Regional Parks cannot accommodate all needs for all visitors, the other components in the system (parks, parklets, playgrounds, fields, greenways, etc.) should be developed and maintained so that those needs can be met elsewhere in the system. If an experience sought cannot be found in one of the four Regional Parks, it should be only a short walk or bike ride away.

Pittsburgh Topography

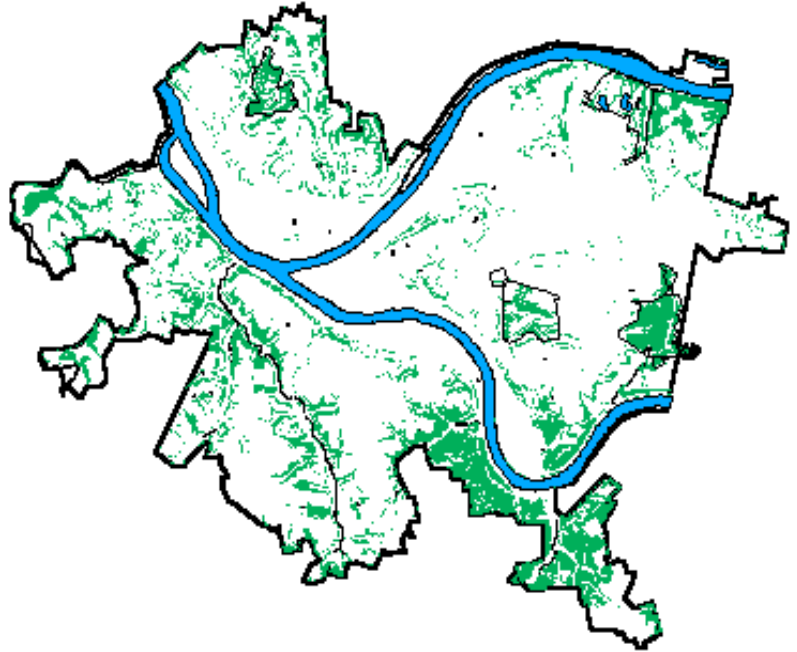
The Regional Parks are located on some of the highest and steepest portions of the City. This results in tremendous views and varied ecological conditions, but offers significant constraints for intensive development and use, particularly recreational fields. Steep slopes and unstable geology throughout the parks also create erosion problems that affect roads and drainage infrastructure.

The direct proximity of three of the four Regional Parks to the rivers; however, offers significant opportunities for recreational and ecological connections through drainages such as Nine Mile Run in Frick, Negley Run and Heths Run in Highland and Junction Hollow and Panther Hollow in Schenley.

Parks as Ecological Reservoirs

The Regional Parks constitute some of the largest and most intact areas of woodland and other preserved habitats and thus are important ecological preserves within the City. They must be preserved as ecological resources while we continue to use them for recreational purposes.

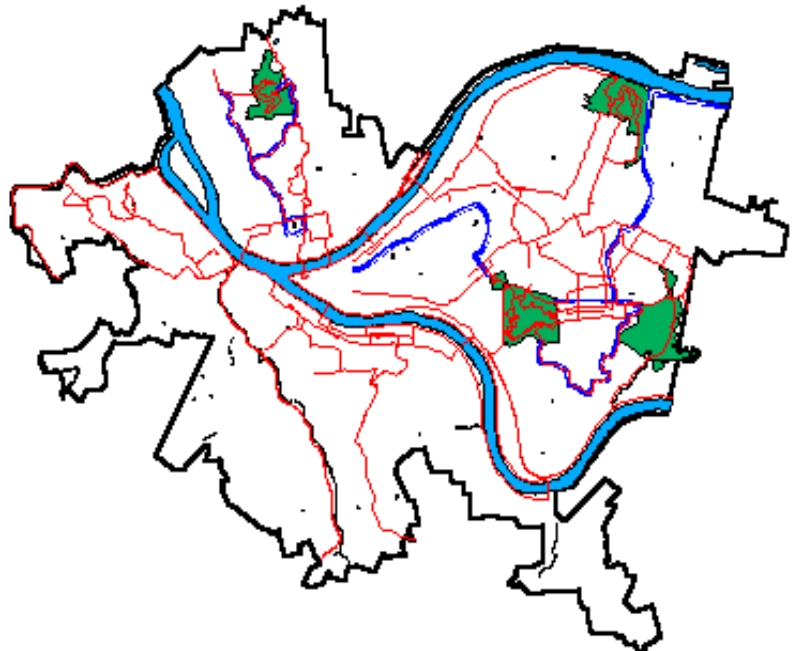
Potential exists to expand the Green Web beyond the Regional Parks to embrace parks, greenways and other places that have significant or unique ecological value.



Boulevard, Street and Trail Connections

A significant opportunity exists to organize the Four Regional Parks as the cornerstones of an interconnected Parks System, linked by the City's expanding trails and greenways. In addition, the rehabilitation of the city's historic boulevards (Beechwood Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, Bigelow Boulevard) as well as Perrysville Avenue and the on-going rehabilitation of playgrounds and neighborhood parks would create a network of pedestrian-connected public spaces linked by grand public thoroughfares.

This system will not only connect the Regional Parks to each other, but to the three rivers, the city and its neighborhoods. Establishing an integrated park infrastructure throughout the city, or Green Web, will link each citizen to the wealth of recreational and ecological opportunities the City has to offer.



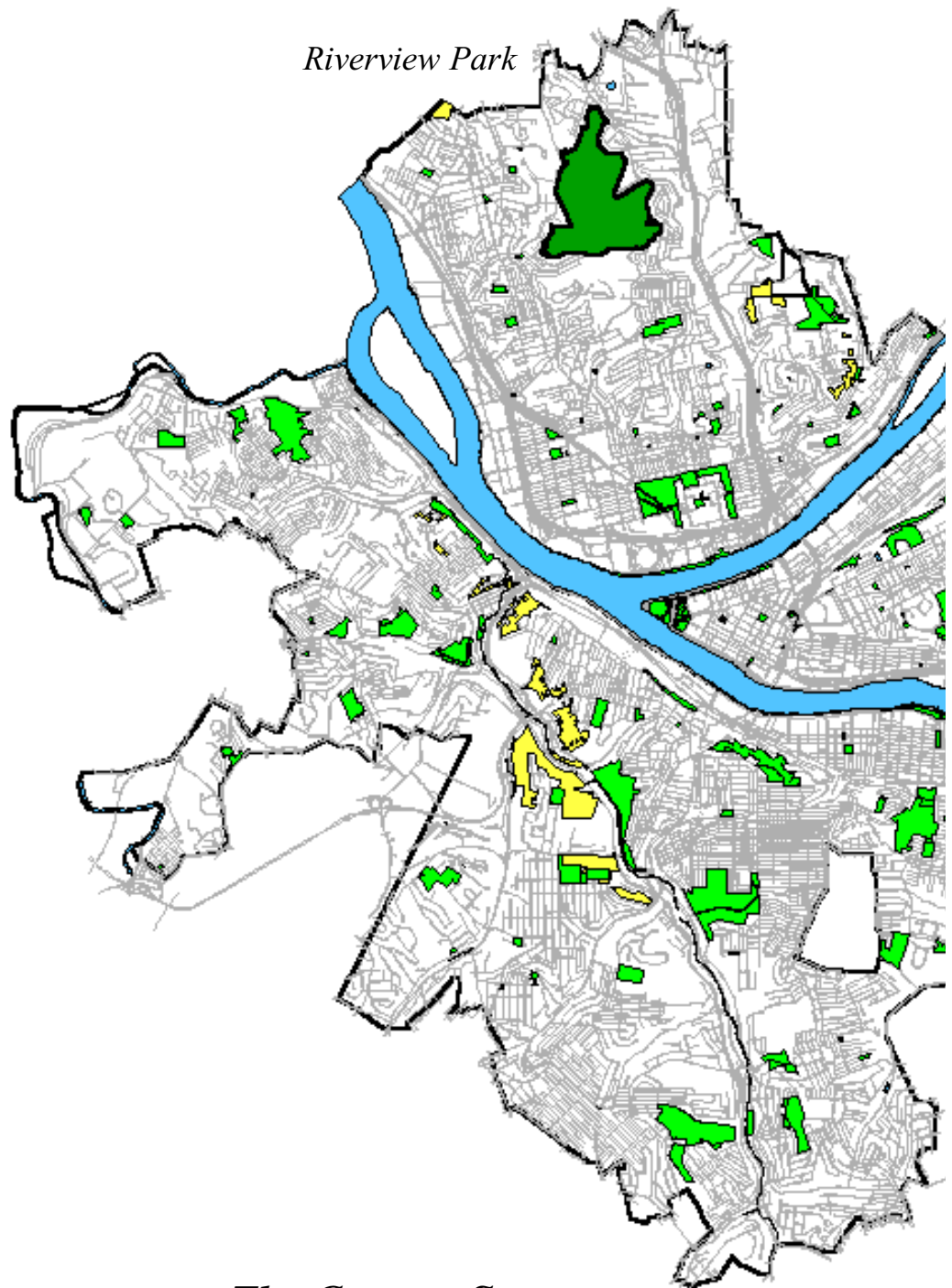
The Challenge of Creating a Park System

Creating a park system for the City of Pittsburgh will be challenging. Some issues and opportunities are:

- Steep topography that limits the uses that can occur.
- The need for active recreation space due to increased participation in organized sports.
- Woodland preservation to retain remaining wildlife habitat.
- Watershed restoration of ecological valuable waterways.
- Establishing improved pedestrian connections between parks.
- Establishing greenways as ecological corridors.
- To think of streets in new ways, as part of a layered park system.

The Big Idea: A Green Web

Instead of individual parks, we must think of a system with the Regional Parks as anchors, supported by other neighborhood parks to collectively meet the recreational needs of all residents. In addition, the changes in our industrial landscape and our economic base has opened up riverfront land and other sites for new uses. We must think creatively of how best to utilize these sites to enhance our park system.



Means to Attain a Park System



- Create a highly visible, comprehensive marketing campaign for the Regional Parks.
- Establish a mental picture in the minds of all park visitors of what a park system is, achieved through the unification of signage, maps, park guides, furnishings and programs.
- Improve connections for pedestrians via streets, boulevards, trails and greenways.
- Study adjacent and vacant land throughout the City for the creation of new parks or facilities that do not exist currently (such as a complex of athletic fields). This is a compliment to the parks and works hand-in-hand with their renewal.
- Establish a city-wide ecological strategy to enhance the natural resources of the parks and expand their influence beyond their boundaries.
- Provide consistent programming throughout the parks to lessen the burden on any one park and thus improve program delivery.
- Re-establish a nature center program within each Regional Park.
- Establish an integrated citizen volunteer program.
- Establish uniform maintenance and design standards.

Capital Improvements Strategies

The implementation of many of the recommendations of this plan will require significant investment in capital improvements, both for rehabilitation and new construction. In many instances we will be engaged in rebuilding degraded landscapes as well as the establishment of new or expanded facilities. The list of projects will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- NaturalResource Restoration Projects.
- Horticulture and Ornamental Landscape Renewal Projects.
- Circulation; trails, roads and parking.
- Facilities; play fields, playgrounds, pools.
- Architecture; shelters, pavilions and recreation buildings.
- Furnishings, usually in conjunction with other projects.
- Infrastructure; utilities, drainage, etc.

In order to insure proper quality of design and construction for these new capital projects new procedures need to be put in place:

- A Project Review Process should be organized either within the Regional Parks Management Committee or as a separate Design Review Subcommittee. This Project Review Process should have authority over all capital projects constructed within the Regional Parks regardless of the implementing body and should include work carried out by: City Departments of Engineering and Construction and Public Works; the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy; institutions such as the Pittsburgh Zoo and the Phipps Conservatory; and any private group seeking to make permanent changes to the parks. This would include any groups or organizations seeking to install memorials, gardens, benches or other artifacts in the parks.
- A clear definition of the roles of the public sector and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy should be established as they pertain to capital projects and their ongoing maintenance. Every new capital project initiated by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy or the City should have a management and maintenance strategy that accounts for the increased maintenance and operational support.
- A Design Manual with a set of standard details, furnishings and fixtures should be developed to insure consistency and high standards; these standard details should be used for all new and restoration projects in the Regional Parks. A set of Design Guidelines, included as part of this Report, should be used as a basis for the development of the Design Manual.

Other Parks System initiatives that should be implemented are:

- **A Trails Master Plan.** This plan and public process will develop detailed guidelines for trail use based on citizen involvement. This is currently underway with the mountain biking community, but it should include all trail visitors. This Trails Plan should result in a consistent set of standards to be applied throughout the Regional Parks.
- **Traffic and Parking Studies.** These are essential for certain Parks, in particular Schenley and Riverview and are necessary follow-up studies to implement the recommendations of this plan.

There are other activities being undertaken throughout the City that will have great bearing on the recommendations of this study. These are:

- **City-wide Recreational Fields Study.** This study will inventory and analyze all current fields in the City and make recommendations about expansion needs and reorganization. This will affect the amount and type of field space that should be provided within the Regional Parks. The results of this study will be critical in helping to determine the type and location of new and rehabilitated fields based on the alternatives presented in this document.
- **Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority Projects.** The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) has been undertaking large infrastructure projects in the Parks, Highland and Frick Parks in particular. These infrastructure projects should be closely coordinated with the proposals outlined in this plan to insure that they are implemented in a manner compatible with the park's character.



The City-wide Recreational Fields Study will inventory and assess all fields within the city.

Operations and Management Strategies

While numerous capital improvement projects will be necessary to restore the physical elements of the park, an equivalent effort must be made to develop innovative management strategies that will result in the careful stewardship over the long term that will be required to sustain these major investments. Many organizational efforts are planned and underway that will help to establish the organized system required.

Many of the key recommendations of the Management Plan were related to Operations and Management strategies. Some of the Interim Recommendations are:

- Strengthen the role of the Department of Parks and Recreation as the governing body that oversees all of the parks.
- Create a clearly focused parks management function within the City of Pittsburgh with a priority to effectively partner with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.
- Promote efficiency in maintenance by supporting the new Department of Public Works Dedicated Park Maintenance Crew Plan, which is currently underway.
- Establish standards within the Department of Public Works to assess the condition and the quality of maintenance in the Regional Parks.

Integrated Resource Management

The Regional Parks must be managed in an integrated way based on their existing and preferred ecological condition with the understanding that these are manipulated landscapes that must be actively managed. In terms of natural resources, this includes the whole set of ecological conditions affecting woodlands, meadows, streams, waterways and wildlife. Important implementation steps that are top priorities are:

- **Woodland Management Plan.** This study, which is a critical recommendation of this Plan would assess and make recommendations for woodland areas within all four Regional Parks. Currently being developed as a joint project between the City and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, this plan will develop short and long-term strategies for integrated pest management, control of invasive species, a palette of plant materials for reforestation and recommendations for maintenance and management.
- **Frick Park (Nine Mile Run) Stewardship Plan.** The Department of City Planning is currently directing an effort that will develop a sustainable stewardship plan for all of Frick Park. This includes Frick Woods (the original 150 acres of Frick Park) which this plan recommends to be expanded to encompass all of the wooded areas in the Park as well as the 100 acres of the Nine Mile Run corridor that will be added to it. This is an extension of the work of the Studio for Creative Inquiry.

Other initiatives that should be implemented include:

- **Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Standards.** These would be more detailed maintenance protocols that specify methods, materials and techniques for maintaining the Regional Parks in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- **Hydrologic/Watershed Studies.** Many of the natural watersheds in the Regional Parks have been modified through the introduction of underground storm drainage systems. Many of the drainage systems have reached the end of their useful life and are in various states of failure. New watershed management plans, such as the one being developed for Nine Mile Run, should be undertaken for these drainages to restore them to a more self-sustaining and functioning system. These may be conducted in conjunction with other infrastructure projects.

Revenue Issues

Continued capital projects and renewed maintenance strategies will require financial resources the City alone does not possess. A Revenue Resources Study should be developed to understand the full spectrum of potential revenue sources from facilities and events in the Parks to help sustain the Parks economically. All available sources of funding should be explored in addition to the RAD funding that the Parks currently receive including: bond issues, gift catalogs, TIFs, park impact fees, concessions, outsourcing management (similar to the Schenley Park Golf Course, etc.). The study should include concessions, visitor fees, special event fees, the Schenley Park Golf Course and all other potential revenue sources.

Visitor Service Strategies

The life of the Parks is in the people who use it. The continued success of the many programs run by the Department of Parks and Recreation and other groups is a testament to that fact. Equally important are the everyday visitors who come to the parks on an individual basis. Organizing and providing the necessary facilities to satisfy current and future demands as well as encouraging increased visitation is a constant challenge. Task force members and visitor surveys have indicated that the following issues are high priorities:

- **Security, Enforcement and Regulation.** The first step in this regard will be to involve the Police in the Regional Parks Management Committee to encourage patrolling and enforcement of quality-of-life issues within the parks.
- **Visitor Centers, Concessions and Restrooms.** These are important everyday facilities that contribute to visitor satisfaction with the park experience. Each park should have a prominently located visitor center that can distribute maps and other information as well as provide the venue for educational and interpretive programs. Concessions and restrooms should be carefully located in supervised locations adjacent to destination facilities so they can be properly maintained.
- **Special Events.** While these are important components of the public life of the Park, they need to be carefully reviewed and regulated to insure that they do not exceed the carrying capacity of the park and do not create impacts that degrade new capital improvements or increase maintenance.
- **Education Opportunities.** Partnerships with schools and other institutions should be explored to bring more activity into the parks.
- **Maps, signs, guides and promotional literature.** These should be developed for each park to inform the public about opportunities and facilities within the parks.
- **Facility Rental Process and Procedures.** Clear rules need to be outlined for renting park facilities and regulations need to be enforced. This process could be used to promote better maintenance of the facilities.

In addition, the following implementation steps should be pursued to expand the scope and quality of visitor services:

- **Environmental Center Visioning Process.** Originally there were nature centers in or adjacent to all four Regional Parks. A visioning process should be undertaken with the Frick Environmental Center that will study how its mission can be expanded to include the restored watershed of Nine Mile Run as well as eventually re-establishing environmental education programs in all four Regional Parks.
- **Permitting Plan.** A coordinated permitting process should be developed that sees fields as part of a system rather than individual and separate facilities. The permitting plan should integrate maintenance requirements.
- **Rangers and Volunteer Programs.** Efforts to establish these two important adjunct functions should be actively explored.



Special Events like the Vintage Grand Prix attract new visitors, but also place incredible demands on the parks.



Volunteers can have a dramatic impact within the parks.

Partnership Strategies

One of the best ways to reinvigorate the parks is by establishing a strong public-private partnership that provides consistent and strong stewardship for them into the future. Many parties have been involved in the development of this plan and their collaboration should continue through its implementation. The key players in this partnership include the City of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the task force members and other constituents and a number of local private foundations who have signaled a willingness to help fund the rehabilitation efforts. In order to sustain this partnership, roles and responsibilities need to be assigned to each of the individual participants.

The City has already taken strong initiatives to reorganize parks management; these include:

- Establishment of the Parks Oversight Committee - this committee comprised of representatives of all City departments including City Planning, Engineering and Construction, Public Works and Parks & Recreation as well as the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. The Committee reviews on-going and future initiatives with in the parks.
- Reorganization of the Public Works Department to include dedicated parks maintenance crews.
- Establishment of a position of Regional Parks Ombudsman within the Mayor's Office to advocate and coordinate parks related issues.



The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy has successfully established itself as the principal advocate for parks and private partner to the City. Its efforts include:

- Conducting visitor surveys to understand public needs and desires.
- Raising capital funds for two demonstration rehabilitation projects, the Reynolds entrance to Frick Park and the Schenley Park Visitor Center.
- Becoming an important advocate for parks as well as higher design and maintenance standards.
- Becoming an advocate for park visitors by improving visitor services (Visitors Center in Schenley Park), promoting education and providing resources.

The task force members and other public participants in the master planning process have made important contributions to setting the agenda for the plan. To continue this three-way partnership the following measures should be instituted:

- Perpetuate the task force contributions by establishing a bi-annual report to the community on the status of the implementation of this Master Plan. This process will encourage accountability on the progress of implementation and continuous public feedback and review.
- Create a clearly focused parks management function within the City of Pittsburgh with a priority to effectively partner with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.
- Explore all potential sources of revenue for the Regional Parks.
- Define the roles of the public sector and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy as they pertain to capital projects and their on-going maintenance. The City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy will work together to develop a strategic funding and implementation approach for all capital projects.

- Constitute the Parks as one organization with a basic structure of accountability that is geographic or park-specific, that is each Regional Park should have a park manager. These park managers should “wake up thinking about the well-being of their park every day”.
- Explore the possibilities of partnerships with other organizations to increase horticultural practices and skills in parks.

Maintaining the Built Environment

The built landscape (which includes the whole ensemble of the park as well as the individual built elements such as walks, walls, bridges, architecture, furnishings as well as horticulture and the ornamental landscape) requires intensive maintenance to preserve historic character and insure that new interventions are compatible with the park's character.

A major reorganization of the way Pittsburgh's Parks are maintained is currently underway and nearing completion. The Department of Public Works has organized separate work crews specifically for park maintenance, separate from the Streets division. These eight dedicated crews will be responsible for specific sectors of the City and will be individually responsible for the parks within their sector. The Department of Public Works has developed a business plan that addresses this change of organization, which is attached as an Appendix to this document. Additionally, specific performance standards and protocols are being written to insure accountability.

Other initiatives that should be implemented include:

- Replace the large Public Works facilities in each park with smaller, park-specific maintenance facility solely dedicated to maintaining that park.
- Maintenance Manual and Performance Standards with evaluation practices.
- Repair and Replacement Standards to insure that consistent quality of materials, workmanship and finishes is adhered to in all future works.

The Importance of Landscape Types

Landscape Types are the component pieces of the natural landscape of the Parks and are defined by natural communities as opposed to human infrastructure such as roads, walks, drainage systems, etc. that has been added. These landscapes, in conjunction with the human infrastructure, establish the setting and overall character of the Parks and become the principal stage of activity. It is important to remember that all of these Parks are highly manipulated landscapes that are managed in certain ways by human intervention. Even a lack of maintenance is intervention into these natural systems. One of the key decisions confronting future restoration of the Parks is how these landscapes will be manipulated and managed to attain the goals set forth in this plan.

Existing Landscape Types

In the process of analyzing the ecological condition of the Regional Parks, the technical design team identified the Landscape Types that exist in each of the Parks. Because of the historic pattern of development and the atrophy of horticultural and woodland maintenance, the Parks are currently made up of only a very few Landscape Types. The predominant types are varieties of woodlands, sports fields and what is described as “park land”, which is turf and lawn with scattered shade or ornamental trees. Areas of disturbance are places that have been cleared or dumped upon and where invasive species have taken over. Diagrammatically, the Landscape Types in the Regional Parks are:

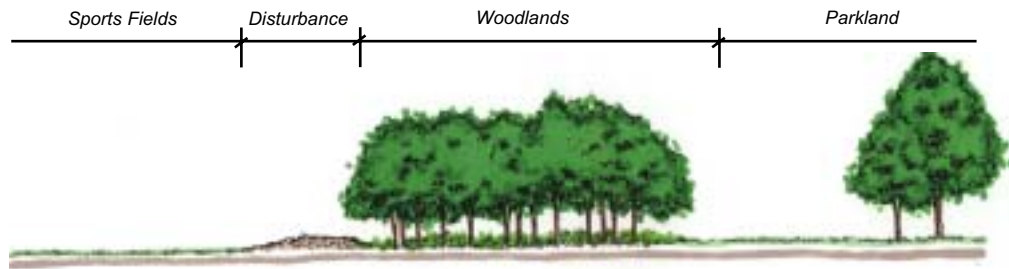


Diagram of Diversified Landscape Types

Redefining the Park Landscape - New and Diversified Landscape Types

Once the existing Landscape Types were identified, it was clear that the Regional Parks do not contain the diversity of landscapes that constitute a healthy environment. In order to restore both the ecological diversity and the historic character of the Parks, the number of Landscape Types must be increased from the limited number that exist. For example, we must improve the special quality of our woodlands by enhancing interior forest conditions as well as restore areas of meadow and shrubland to our Parks. By increasing the number of Landscape Types we increase the experiences available to visitors while increasing the habitat value for wildlife. These new Landscape Types are diagrammed below:

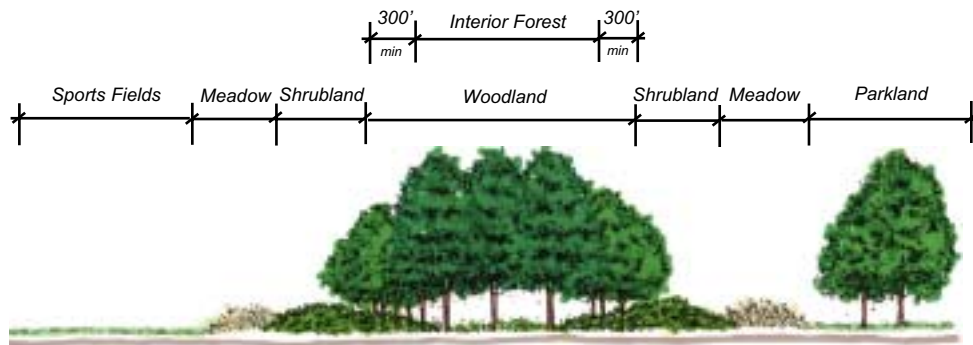


Diagram of Diversified Landscape Types

A wonderful opportunity exists to greatly enhance the ecological value of our parks by instituting a new value system for the landscape, one that places high value on rare habitats but does not ignore the possibilities in even the most ordinary places. These values are:

Highest Value - Interior Forests and Naturally Occurring Waterways

Interior Forests are rare habitats that exist a minimum of 100 meters from a woodland edge. This is important for select species of songbirds that require remote, protected habitat and is an indicator of a larger more complex forest ecosystem. Naturally occurring waterways are valuable components of the hydrologic cycle and provide specialized habitat for a diverse collection of plants and animals.

High Value - Woodlands / Woodland Edges / Meadows / Ponds

These are areas where the landscape is changing or transitioning. These include woodland areas that fall outside of the definition of Interior Forest, successional woodland edges, areas of unmanaged meadow or unmown open areas and shrublands as well as ponds and man-made waterbodies.

Moderate Value - Park Landscape

Park landscape includes areas of turf and trees, play fields, courts, playgrounds, reservoirs, gardens, ornamental landscapes and other areas of mown grass and lawn.

Increasing Value - Corridors

These are linear connections between any and all Landscape Types and are defined by topography, woodlands or waterways. Corridors provide a continuous habitat pattern or connectivity. These can include and be utilized for recreational possibilities.

The new and diversified Landscape Types that should be within the Regional Parks are described below as well as history, appropriate use and management recommendations:

Interior Forest

Ecology:

Expand closed canopy areas that are a minimum of 100 meters from the woodland edge. Preserve and protect these unique, rare habitats.

History:

An intimate experience within woodlands was always a key part of the park experience.

Use:

Controlled trail use should limit impacts and disturbance. Trail width and type should conform to nature trail standards defined in the Appendix. These areas present opportunities for environmental education.

Management:

Diversify understory plants, control erosion and invasive species.



Historical Interior Forest

Woodlands

Ecology:

These areas should be preserved as a unique habitat for edge species that also provides a buffer for Interior Forest and Streams.

History:

These provide a transitional experience through dappled light into the Interior Forest.

Use:

Provide multi-purpose trails for non-motorized uses and maintenance access.

Management:

Emphasize the control of erosion and invasive species, replanting trail edges and closing the tree canopy in open or disturbed areas.



Woodland



Stream

Streams and Wetlands

Ecology:

Freshwater aquatic habitats provide species diversity and important connections to floodplain areas as well as the rivers.

History:

Because of the traditional appeal of water bodies, these were viewed as landscape amenities that were often reshaped as ornamental waterbodies with paths and walkways along them.

Use:

Controlled pedestrian trail use should limit impacts and disturbance. Trail width and type should conform to nature trail standards as defined in the Design Guidelines. These areas present important opportunities for environmental education.

Management:

Stabilize eroding banks with bioengineering; enhance species diversity and monitor restorations.



Shrubland

Shrubland

Ecology:

This is a unique habitat of low-growing herbaceous and woody plants that occurs at the woodland edge. It provides important habitat for nesting and feeding birds as well as plant species diversity.

History:

These landscapes were used to open and frame views into and over the park as part of the scenic composition.

Use:

View points and terraces and along pedestrian walks and adjacent to woodland edges. Bird watching.

Management:

Impede natural succession by removal of tree saplings, suppression of invasives and planting of native shrub species.



Meadow

Meadow

Ecology:

Meadows are stable, low-maintenance areas composed of warm-season grasses and wildflowers. They grow 3 to 6 feet in height and provide specialized habitat for a variety of species.

History:

Higher mowing heights were historically used around ponds, water bodies and less used areas.

Use:

Non-motorized uses should be restricted to constructed trails or mown paths in spring and summer, off-trail use can occur without damage in other seasons. Meadows, because of their infrequent occurrence in urban settings, provide important environmental education opportunities.

Management:

Carefully match the grass and flower species to soils and climate, control of invasives and regular but infrequent mowing is crucial for establishment.

Parkland

Ecology:

Stable mixed species of turf and trees with a permeable surface has low, but some value to urban wildlife.

History:

Parkland is the traditional, pastoral, park-like image that is familiar to most visitors.

Use:

Parkland is resilient and can sustain relatively intensive and varied use throughout the seasons.

Management:

Use sustainable maintenance practices including controlled and organic fertilizers, integrated pest management, tree care and mowing regimes.



Parkland

Gardens

Ecology:

Flowers and herbaceous plants are beneficial to birds and insects.

History:

Historic locations occurred as ornamental elements at buildings, monuments, fountains and entries.

Use:

Gardens provide passive enjoyment and visual pleasure. They act as welcoming elements and signify special features.

Management:

There is a need to redevelop horticultural skills within the maintenance workforce; these skills should include organic gardening principles and integrated pest management. Consideration should be given to the use of volunteer labor, as there are many skilled gardeners throughout the community.



Gardens

Playfields

Ecology:

While not a natural plant community, these areas serve an important ecological function as permeable surfaces for water infiltration.

History:

Original park elements which were often clustered together in groups or complexes according to the available level ground.

Use:

Active field sports and organized events.

Management:

Integrated pest management, use best management practices for infiltration and control of storm water runoff.



Playfields

Management Goals for Individual Landscape Types

Proper management is critical for any of the new Landscape Types to achieve recreational or ecological benefit. To ensure this, the Landscape Type must be matched to the human uses and activities and can be understood as occurring along a continuum that matches the highest ecological value to the lowest intensity of use and the lowest ecological value to the most intensive uses. Each of these Landscape Types must be understood and managed in a way that acknowledges and balances each of four factors:

**Ecological
Value**



- Interior Forest
- Streams & Wetlands
- Woodland
- Shrublands
- Meadows/Savannah
- Parkland (Trees & Turf)
- Gardens
- Playfields
- Playgrounds & Courts

**Intensity
of Use**

- *Ecology.* What is the optimal ecological condition for that particular Landscape Type and what are the major obstacles towards attaining that state? An important corollary to that is; what is the most sustainable and environmentally sound method of maintaining it in that state?
- *History.* What was the historic character of that Landscape Type in that particular place and was that compatible with the optimal ecological condition? Has the historic condition been lost or can it be rehabilitated in a manner that is compatible with the other factors?
- *Use.* What are the traditional uses that have occurred and are they appropriate to either the existing or preferred condition? Closely matching appropriate use to the Landscape Type is a key consideration to long-term success.
- *Maintenance & Management.* Once the appropriate balance of ecology, history and use has been defined, the manner and methodology of maintaining that condition must become part of the overall park maintenance strategy. Particularly in the case of newly restored Landscape Types, whether they are Interior Forests or Gardens both initial and long-term maintenance are key to their success.

Design Considerations Based on Landscape Types



The Landscape Type will determine the scale and material choice for new elements.

When constructing any improvement or renovating an existing element, consideration should be given to the Landscape Type where this improvement occurs. Something built within a *Woodland* should be more carefully located than something within *Parkland*, as Woodlands are more sensitive habitats.

As an example, trails and pathways will traverse many different Landscape Types, therefore their size and material should vary depending on where they occur. Walkways at park edges should be generously sized (10 - 12') and be paved with a stable, hard-surfaced material, such as concrete or asphalt. These are appropriate for entries, park edges and Landscape Types such as *Parkland*, *Gardens* and *Playfields*.

Recreation trails that connect the entries to destination or interior spaces can be smaller in width (6 - 8') and paved with a stable, porous but not necessarily hard-surfaced material, such as crushed limestone. This trail type is appropriate within *Woodlands*, *Shrublands*, *Meadows* and select *Stream/Wetland* landscape types

Woodland paths should be the smallest of all the trails (2 - 3') and should be paved with bark or stabilized earth. These are appropriate within *Interior Forests* and select *Woodland* Landscape Types.



Walks and Paths



Recreation Trails



Woodland Path

These cross sections illustrate the scale of the different trail types proposed and how they will vary depending upon the Landscape Type which they traverse. This variety of detailing should be applied to all improvements within the Parks so that every element is responsive to the setting with which it is located.

A New Beginning - Accomplishments to Date

Even before this master plan was finalized, activities were going on within the City and within the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy that would ultimately compliment the recommendations set forth herein. These ideas were considered important before, and now, when seen in concert with the recommendations of this master plan, take on increased validity. These are:

The creation of park-specific work crews within the Department of Public Works. The proposal for work crews responsible for each park was initiated by the Department of Public Works.

Establishment of Parks Oversight Committee. This is the continuation of the Parks Management Committee that was formed when this process began, and contains the same members.

Creation of a position within the Office of the Mayor to concentrate on the Regional Parks and park related issues.

Pilot projects within each of the four Regional Parks, undertaken by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, to reinforce a newfound commitment to parks and promote the Conservancy as their primary advocate.



Restored gatehouses at the Reynolds Street entry to Frick Park - just one of the pilot projects undertaken by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

System-Wide Strategies

Maintenance

*Park-Specific Public Works Crews **

*Performance and Skill Standards for
Department of Public Works Crews*

*Remove Public Works District Facilities
within the Regional Parks in favor
of smaller park-specific facilities*

Trail Maintenance and Development

Management

*Parks Oversight Committee **

*Woodland/Hydrology Management Plan
for each Regional Park **

New Project Review Process

Revenue Resource Plan

*Expand partnership between the City
and the Parks Conservancy*

Public Outreach

*Re-establish Visitor Centers and improve
visitor services in each of the four
Regional Parks*

*Visioning Process with the Frick
Environmental Center to establish
nature centers in each Park*

Trail Maps and Signage Program

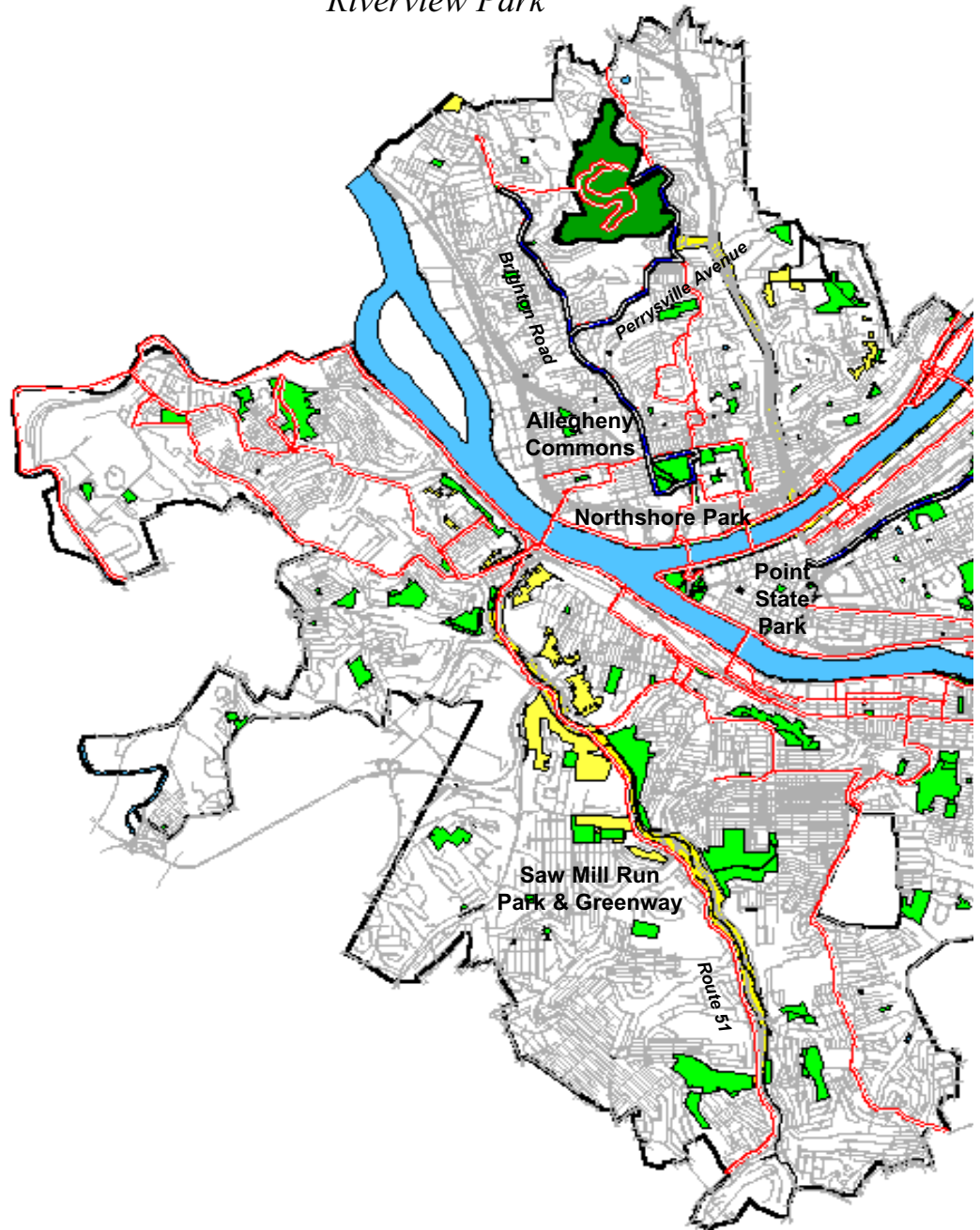
Infrastructure and Programs

*City-Wide Fields Assessment **

*Frick Park and Nine Mile Run
Stewardship Plan **

Greenway and Trail Connections

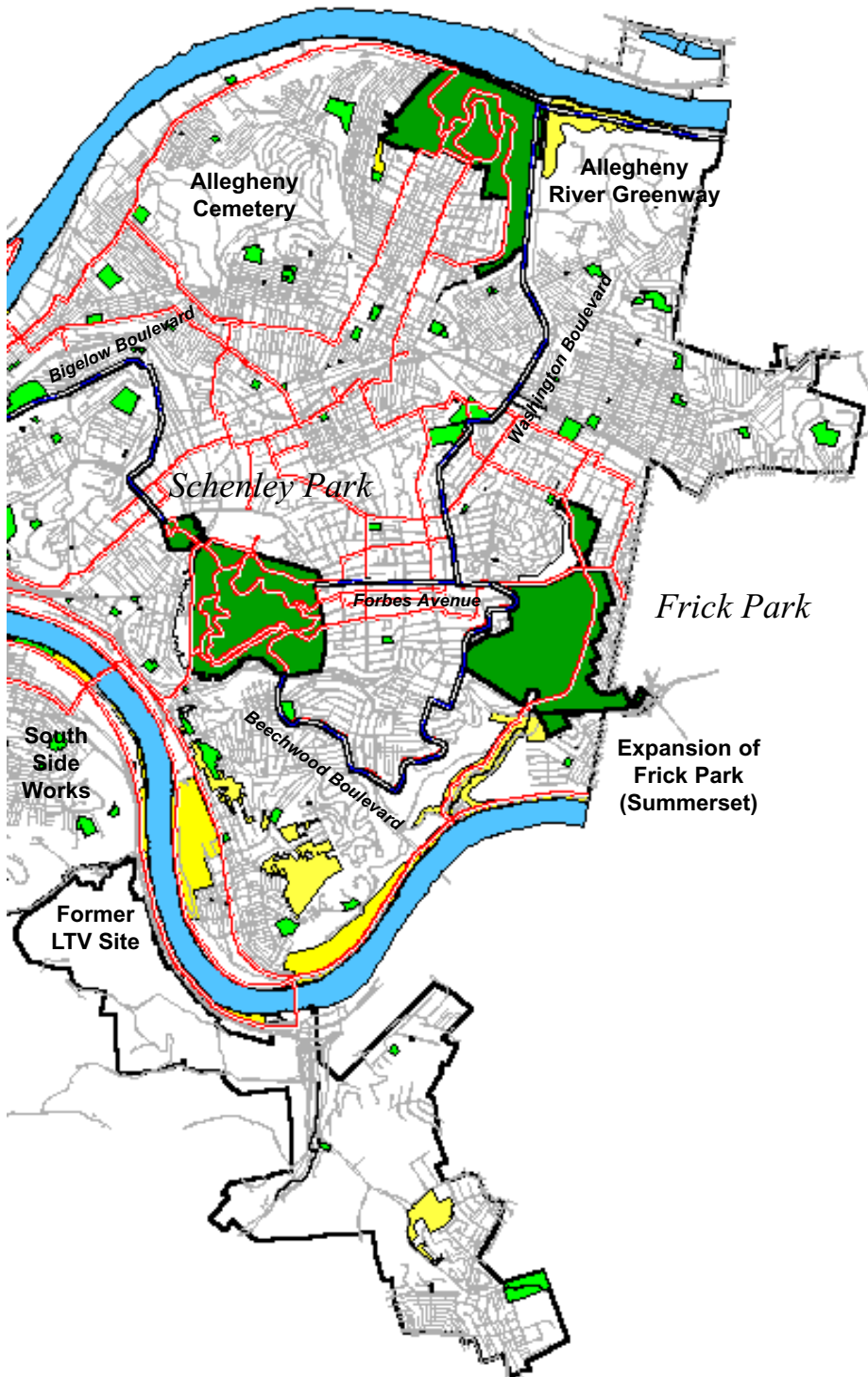
Riverview Park



Creating a Green Web

** Indicates an initiative currently underway*

Highland Park



Summary

To revitalize the Regional Parks will require change, primarily in the way we as a City, view parks. We must adopt the sentiment that existed when these Parks were developed - that these are precious, valuable landscapes that contribute immeasurably to the quality of life in Pittsburgh. We must foster a new ethic towards the Regional Parks - an ethic of stewardship. This ethic must be instilled in all those who come in contact with the Parks, from City officials, to maintenance staff to the daily visitor. All must be appreciative of our collective respect for the Regional Parks.

We must work together towards this goal a new ethic of stewardship. New partners should be sought and existing alliances strengthened to broaden the revenue base and draw from the wealth of talent in the region.

We must rebuild the essential and special character of each Regional Park so they serve us well into the future. Each is historically significant, each must renew its ecological integrity and each must accommodate modern activities. However, these Parks do have limitations, they cannot meet all the recreational demands of the entire City. Therefore, we must not think of the Regional Parks in isolation but rather as cornerstones in a system - *A Green Web* of parks, greenways and public spaces that link neighborhoods and distribute recreational experiences throughout the City. Creating a system will be the perfect complement to all the restoration projects that need to occur within each Park.